



The President's Daily Brief

25 February 1972



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Israel's strong retaliation to the latest fedayeen raids along the Lebanese border creates problems for Beirut. (Page 1)

The Greeks and President Makarios continue to wait each other out. (Page 2)

The Argentine justice minister tells us there has been a major breakthrough in negotiations with Juan Peron. (Page 3)

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ISRAEL-LEBANON

Israel has retaliated promptly and vigorously for the killing of two Israeli civilians by fedayeen along the Lebanese border on Wednesday. On Friday [redacted] Israeli troops, supported by armor and artillery, occupied three villages in southern Lebanon. Houses were destroyed, and some prisoners were taken. At the same time, Israeli aircraft attacked fedayeen bases on the slopes of Mount Hermon near the junction of the Lebanese, Syrian, and Israeli frontiers. Also, [redacted] Israeli aircraft overflew Beirut [redacted]

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All of the villages attacked by the Israelis are known to harbor fedayeen, and strikes of this kind follow a well-established Israeli pattern. Overflights of the Lebanese capital are unusual, however, and are intended to point up to the Lebanese their vulnerability and to stimulate greater Lebanese efforts to control the fedayeen.

The Israeli action comes at a bad time for Lebanon, where a parliamentary election campaign is just getting under way. Beirut again faces the dilemma of choosing between trying to limit fedayeen activities--and risking a clash with them--or allowing the fedayeen to operate across the border--and inviting Israeli reprisals.

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CYPRUS

The Greeks and President Makarios are waiting each other out. Greece's demands for Makarios' resignation and governmental changes still stand, but Prime Minister Papadopoulos seems to be shifting his tactical pressure to stress a need for quarantining the Archbishop's newly acquired Czech arms.

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Papadopoulos hinted that Greece was trying to get the support of Glafcos Clerides, the head of the Greek Cypriot House of Representatives, as part of its effort to force out Makarios.

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Clerides subsequently told a US diplomat

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that there must be an "alternative" to Makarios, and that no man is "indispensable."

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Clerides is not yet making a bid for the presidency of Cyprus, but he clearly is keeping his options open for suggesting himself as an alternative to Makarios.

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ARGENTINA

Justice Minister Quijano has told Ambassador Lodge that there has been a major breakthrough in negotiations with Juan Peron. He said that the Argentine ambassador to Spain had carried a message to President Lanusse last weekend in which Peron renounced any desire for the presidency and stated that he would accept a military man as the next president. Quijano also reported that there was a strong likelihood that Lanusse would soon visit Spain at the invitation of President Franco so that he could personally conclude the agreement with Peron.

Lanusse's tactic has been to try to divide the Peronist movement--the largest electoral bloc in the country--while keeping the door open for an arrangement with Peron. Peron has a reputation for double dealing, and the military is wary of him, but they draw confidence from his apparent inability to reunite his movement and his advanced age (78).

The military is firmly opposed to any Peronist resumption of power, but may be willing to provide financial assistance to the former dictator and to "rehabilitate his image" in exchange for his cooperation. Even if Peron agrees to renounce any personal ambition for the presidency, Lanusse and the Peronists must still find a mutually acceptable candidate before elections can be held.

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NOTES

USSR:

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Japan-USSR: The semi-official Japan-Soviet Economic Committee has agreed to begin serious study for the joint development of West Siberian oil resources and the construction of a 2,670-mile pipeline to the Sea of Japan. In May the Japanese will send a mixed government and industry team for on-site inspection of the Tyumen oil field, the first time the Soviets will have permitted them a close look at the area.

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